The Society of Inquiry, Theol. Seminary. Co. A. & C. to the
Society of Inquiry Theol. Seminary, Princeton N.J. 3

March 29th 1834

Dear Brethren

It is pleasant to reflect upon the present prosperity of the church of Christ on earth. Our correspondence is not filled with gloom, because true religion is almost extinct, & every day increases the victories, & exultations of the enemies of God. We do not live in the midst of a dark age, surrounded by persecutors, a feeble & solitary band. But God has given us delightful evidence that his promises are sure, & that the glorious things, which are spoken of the church will be fulfilled. It is true, that the word of the Lord endureth forever; & that his promise is of itself a sufficient foundation for unshaken confidence, but we can never have a full conception of the meaning of his precious promises, until we have learned it by our own experience. We have the clearest, & strongest views of the great, & never-failing mercy of God, when we can both lay our hands upon his promises, & upon their fulfilment, when we can compare the declarations of his Word

with the actual dispensations of his grace. How interesting then are the transactions of the present day. We see, at this time, a wonderful diffusion of divine knowledge. The circulation of the Scriptures throughout our own country, the great efforts made for the establishment of sabbath-schools, the distribution of tracts, the multiplied means of moral, & religious improvement at home, are to be taken in connection with the whole system of missionary operations abroad, and all these things are the gracious fulfilment of the promises of the Holy Scriptures. These considerations ought to strengthen, & enlarge our faith, & especially they ought to induce us to come boldly, & frequently to the throne of grace, & to ask for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This we spiritually need at the present time, & without it, it is in vain, that a vast, & magnificent scheme of means is kept in operation. "As the body without the spirit is dead", so is the whole system of home, & foreign enterprize without the outpouring of the life-giving influences of the Spirit upon the churches. May we not again enjoy such seasons of revival, as occurred two, or three years ago & filled many families, & communities with joy, & peace? Will not He who has promised blessings to those, who ask him, & who has so often

& abundantly bestowed blessings, hear, & answer the prayers of his people? If we do not seek, & obtain a return of revivals of religion throughout our country, what have we to expect? Will the churches prosper? Will the cause of missions flourish? - While we rejoice in the prosperity of the church, & the advancement of missions, may we be induced, & encouraged to pray more earnestly, & may we never lose a deep sense of our entire dependance upon the Holy Spirit. - It is with sincere pleasure, that we tell you of the favorable indications of christian enterprize in this part of our country. These are principally the formation of a Board of Missions auxiliary to the American Board, the recent formation of Societies of Inquiry at Athens Geo., & at Tuscaloosa, Ala., & the increasing interest felt in behalf of the slave population.

You are probably aware, that two of the members of the first class of graduates from this Seminary, gave themselves up to the cause of missions, & that one of them is now in Africa. It is probable, that the other Brother James L Merrick will leave this country in a few months for Persia. - One of the greatest obstacles to the cause of missions in this part of our country is the extreme destitution at home. There is too much ground for this objection, & we feel, that we should have great difficulty in answering it, if the experiment of missions had not been already made. This objection has always

been a favourite theme of the opposers of true religion, & it is by no means strange, that it is a real difficulty in the minds of many serious, & humble believers. But, we thank God, we can appeal to facts. We can show, that success attends the efforts of missionaries, & that the effect of missionary enterprize is to quicken, & revive the whole christian church. We are strong in arguments from the Word of God, & from the Providence of God. These argu-

ments, which we use with the opposers of missions, come home with tenfold force to our own hearts. They cry aloud against our indifference. They brand us with inconsistency, if we do not act, as we speak. May the God of all grace fill our hearts with the spirit of missions, may we be more faithful in our duties at home, & may we never forget the trembling brethren

Yrs — in the bonds of christian affection

Richard Hooker — In behalf of the Society.